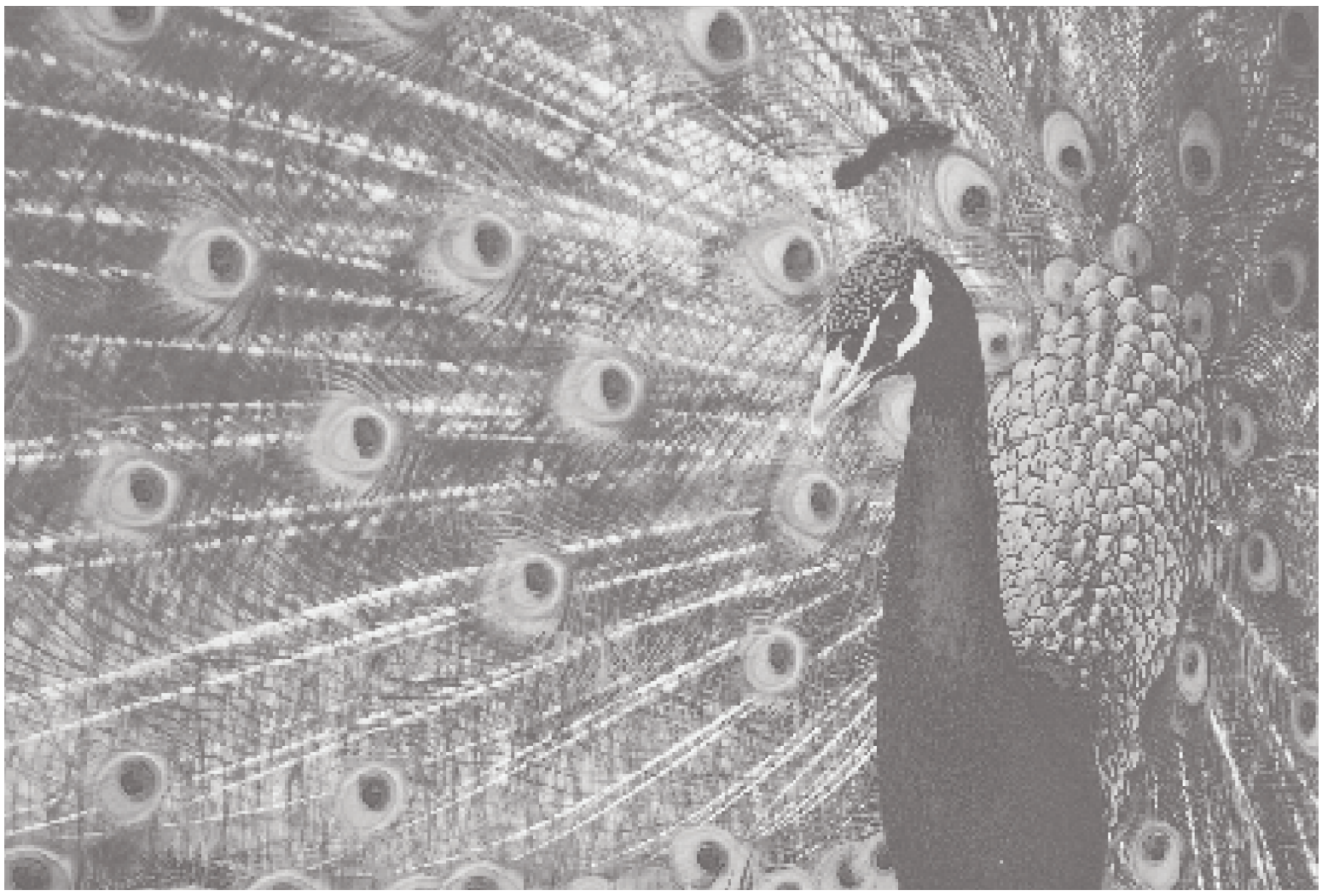
December 2010
*Savant*
Volume XIV Issue II

# Artist of the issue: Parker Stidham



Arts and Communication Magnet Academy
*11375* SW Center Street Beaverton, Oregon *97005*

# Contents

## Table of Contents


**COVER**
Photography by Artist of the Issue, Parker Stidham. Left to right: The Peacock, Sign Post, and Maze.

**UP FRONT**
News you ought to know

**FEATURES**
Seasonal mayhem and madness

**ARTS AND COMMUNITY**
What is going on inside and outside of our school

**SPEAK**
Savant speaks out

**DIVERSIONS**
Reviews, distractions, and things you did not know you wanted to know


## Staff List


**Adviser**
Leann O'Rourke

**Managing Editors**
Jen Johnson
Margaret Forslund

**Copy Editor**
Marissa Cummings

**Section Editors**
Qori Gutierrez
Nysa Smith
Aparna Parthasarathy
Jenna Miller
Brandon Fisher

**Photo Editor**
Christa Moorhead

**Designers**
Mike McRae
Jade Conrad-Deal
Ninel Badasyan

**Online Editors**
Denis Berberovic
Barry Fowler
Tyler St. Pierre

**Staff Reporters**
Noah Marger
Nikki Boylan
Kevin McKiernan
Thomas Nelson
Nicole Wooden


## December/ January

| Sun. | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thur. | Fri. | Sat. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 **Susan Weil and Jose Betancourt: Blueprints** Blue Sky Gallery 12pm | 20 **Trail Blazers vs. Milwaukee** Rose Garden 7 pm | 21 **Winter Solstice** | 22 **Gulliver's Travels** opens in movie theaters | 23 **Festivus for the resf of us, the non-denominational holiday** | 24 **National Chocolate day** | 25 **Christmas Day** |
| 26 **First day of Kwanzaa** | 27 **Battery Powered Music** Backspace Cafe 8 pm | 28 **Hair** Keller Auditorium 7:30 pm | 29 **Writing resumes and cover letters workshop** Portland State 2 pm | 30 **Suzy Kitman** The Guardino Gallery Dec. 30- Jan. 23 | 31 **New Year's eve** | 1 Seaside Art Walk 5pm |
| 2 **ZooZoo** Imago Theatre Dec. 10- Jan. 2 7pm | 3 **Return to school** 7:40 am | 4 **Trivia Day** | 5 **Eagle Cap Sled Dog Race "Oregon's Iditorod"** Eastern Oregon Jan. 5- 8 | 6 **Chance Hayden Fenouil** in the Pearl 6 pm | 7 **Shen Yun classical Chinese dance and music** Keller Auditorium 7:30 pm | 8 **Therese Murdza** GBD architects (gallery) Dec. 2 - Jan. 8 |
| 9 **National Portfolio Day** Oregon College of Arts and Craft 12 pm | 10 **Friends of Chamber Music present Pacfica Quartet** Lincoln Performance Hall 7:30 pm | 11 **Hood to Coast Film premiere** Keller Auditorium 7 pm | 12 **Portland Boat Show** Expo center Jan. 12-16 | 13 **Amber Alert Awareness Day** | 14 **Winter Formal** Urban Studios in Portland 8 pm | 15 **Free SAT practice test** Beaverton Library meeting room A & B 11 am |

# Mission Statement

Savant is a student-organized, student-written youth zine. We, the Savant staff, believe that school journalism belongs to the students and that school news should be reported by the students. We also believe that each art pathway at our school should be represented in the paper equally. We pledge to work hard, dig deep, and most importantly, represent our unique school to its fullest extent.

**Seasons Greetings from Savant!**

For this and more Savant news, visit:

**http://my.hsj.org/or/beaverton/acma**

# Up Front

## Artist of the issue: Parker Stidham

**LEFT:** The Pigeon **CENTER:** Western **RIGHT**: Parker Stidham displays a bowl he threw in Ceramics 2, in his free time he throws something else, as the pitcher for a local baseball team.

*Photos by Parker Stidham and Margaret Forslund*

**Jen Johnson, Managing Editor**

Middle school is often a time for the exploration of interests, and experimentation therein, but eighth grader Parker Stidham seems to have it all figured out. He is a photographer and ceramicist, with a passion for the darkroom and urban images. Stidham first came to ACMA to explore ceramics, but later discovered that he was most comfortable behind the lens of a camera.

His older sister, Samantha Stidham, who graduated last year, first inspired him to begin taking pictures.

"I thought [photo] was an interesting medium," he said "and I wanted to learn more about it."

He soon realized that he preferred working in the darkroom much more than snapping digital shots.

"The way you have to make the photograph is more appealing to me," said Stidham of traditional printing.

"With digital you just have to upload it to the computer and you're done. With darkroom you have to develop the film and print the photo, which is more appealing to me."

Stidham also has a love for athletics, playing as a pitcher and a catcher on a baseball team, but to him they are one in the same.

"You have to put thought into a photo, and put thought into baseball," he said. " In a photo you are thinking about what you want your viewer to see, and in baseball you are thinking about what you want your coach to see."

With his audience in mind, Stidham has everything in focus.

# Turning pennies into presents

**Jenna Miller, Section Editor**

Four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and 1,250 students out of a home this Holiday Season. For many of us, snow may mean bundling up inside by a fire with a cup of hot chocolate and a good book, but for one out of ten Beaverton school district students, the holiday season sings a far different tune. With freezing temperatures approaching and increased competition for housing, many teens are living on the street. Whether to escape their home lives, or because of their economic situations, the homeless of Beaverton have a very different perspective on the spirit of the season.

Arguments as to why the Beaverton School District has the largest homeless population in the state range from relocation to Oregon, the recent flooding of incoming employees from surrounding states, a super-competitive housing market- which makes it difficult for families to afford their own housing- and family dysfunction. These reasons, however, do little to soothe the suffering of displaced teens district wide. All the needy students know is that each day is getting a little colder and that they are far away from being in a situation where they could dream of sugar plums while warm in their beds.

Hope, however, can find a face in many forms. Although immediate fears regarding weather conditions and job shortages are growing more dire as we approach the new year, the charity of the holidays brings some students the good cheer they needed. Programs like Outside In, New Avenues for Youth, and P:ear all help to channel excess goodwill to the homeless of Oregon during the holidays. These nonprofit organizations are looked upon as models of excellence for the best practices of street safety, funding basic needs such as clothes and food, and transitional practices to teach the kids how to get off the streets.

So don't be a Grinch this holiday season. Give a little joy to one of the many local, regional, and international charity programs that focus their resources on helping the needy. With an abundance of celebratory cheer and necessity, Beaverton residents have many easy and effective ways to turn a blue Christmas into seasonal bliss for hundreds of students who long to come to school every day for the meager warmth of the hallways.

# Families at war face the holidays

**Nicole Wooden, Staff Reporter**

When one hears "holidays," what picture comes to mind? Most see a softly lit living room, with a fire and a dozing family. Perhaps in the corner there is a magnificent Christmas tree or a Menorah, glowing with dancing flames. For many, the image is not a room with a quiet family who silently goes through their preparations with gloom and loss huddling above them. This picture is one of a family missing a member. This is a family affected by war.

Every year, families celebrate their holidays without a member, someone dear to them who is busy fighting for our country overseas. Holidays are especially hard for them, because their loved one's absence is especially visible during special times. These missing members leave huge holes in the family's holiday spirit.

Somewhere there's a mother, who does her best to buy presents with just her husband's military income. Somewhere, an old couple decorates the house with pictures of their only son, who will not be able to celebrate with them this year. Somewhere, there is a family missing a brother, and hoping for his safe return.

8th grader Sofia Eptaimeros is part of one of those families. She lives with her two brothers, mom, dad, and grandma. Now, with one brother preparing to be a solider, the family is suddenly much smaller.

"We don't really have many traditions. I mean, we just make big dinners and eat together. But it's different without Lars," says Eptaimeros.

Lars Eptaimeros was, and is, a major part of the family but now he is off getting ready to serve America. His family can't help but miss him, and feel the fear.

The Eptaimeros family are not the only ones who have missed a loved one during the holiday season. Sophomore Nathan Howard's mother served for 26 years in the military, and Howard knows the feeling well.

"I felt like a part of myself was missing," Howard explains. "My mom is like my best friend."

The effect on a child whose parent is away at war is saddening and sobering.

"I felt unimportant," says Howard.

While some family traditions cease to exist, others still continue on. Even though those traditions are still celebrated, they seem to lack the festive mood, and a shadow seems to rest in the chair where an absent family member usually sits.

# Looking beyond your traditional holiday

**Noah Marger, Staff Writer and Brandon Fisher, Section Editor**

With the holiday season upon us, people tend to act a little crazy. From the visting of family, to holiday shopping, everyone is on edge.Even so, some folks take wacky to the extreme with bizarre holiday traditions and rituals.

If you like bearded guys (or in this case, women) look no further than Newton in Wales, United Kingdom where, on November 28, men, women, and children alike come together to celebrate Santa Claus. The participants pay an entry fee and all proceeds go to a local charity, Dial-a-Ride, a foundation that donates money to find cures for life-threatening diseases. In 2004, this festival broke a Guinness World Record for "most Santas gathered in a single place," with 3,445 Santas. This record was broken again in 2007 by a similar festival in Northern Ireland that had 12,965 Santas gathered.

Every December 7 in Guatemala, people celebrate the season by ripping planks of wood off of the sides of their houses and burn them in the street to make sure evil spirits don't invade their homes during the holidays. This ritual called "Quema del Diablo" (Burning of the Devil) is done before the feast of Immaculate Conception, to celebrate Jesus Christ.

In New York City, people take pride in the ability to stay awake and withstand the cold every December 31 to celebrate the New Year. People gather in New York's Times Square and wait long hours for the "Ball", a large gold sphere that helps count down the final minutes of the new year, to drop and signify that it is the New Year. People have been doing this since 1904.

In Austria, people don't ask Santa Claus for gifts. They ask Krampus to stay away from them so they don't get beaten up. Krampus, Santa's supposed evil twin, is the one that kids and adults alike worry about during Christmas. On December 5, people dress up as Krampus and roam the streets looking for victims to hit with a stick. This is a tradition that is sure to scare anyone who participates.

Don't expect to do any sweeping on Christmas Eve in Norway. You won't be able to find a broom anywhere. People in Norway hide their brooms in their closets to celebrate Jul (pronounced Yul), a celebration that originated because people did not want witches and evil spirits to take their brooms to fly around and wreck havoc through the night.

To sum everything up, holidays are celebrated throughout the world. Whether it includes dressing in Santa outfits, ripping wood panels off your house, or smacking someone with a stick, the holidays are a time to celebrate, laugh, and be happy.

# Dancing for the spirit of the season

**Nysa Smith, Section Editor**

Every year homelessness gets harder to ignore as it hits younger and younger age groups. Last year, the Beaverton School District reported having over a thousand homeless students, the highest count in the state of Oregon. Spirit of the Season, a dance performance, addressed the prevalence of our generosity when it comes to the hungry and homeless in cities around the world during the winter holidays.

On December 3 and 4, Dance West - with guest performances by Dance Lab, Dance Ensemble, and Dance West II - told the story of the homeless during the holidays, as well as paid tribute to how different cultures celebrate them.

Upholding the underlying theme of hope and the wonder of the season, the central character was the Spirit herself played by senior Shannon Redfield. Floating above the rest of the performance, she watched the world with a caring eye and a sweet air of generosity about her. The entire piece was tied together with a poem by David Packard titled "Rendezvous," the story of the Spirit of the Season and her mission. The favored line of the poem was:

"I have an assignment within the darkest of depths."

It reflects upon the journey of the Spirit to answer the call of those who need her, and the ever present shadow of homelessness on the United States.

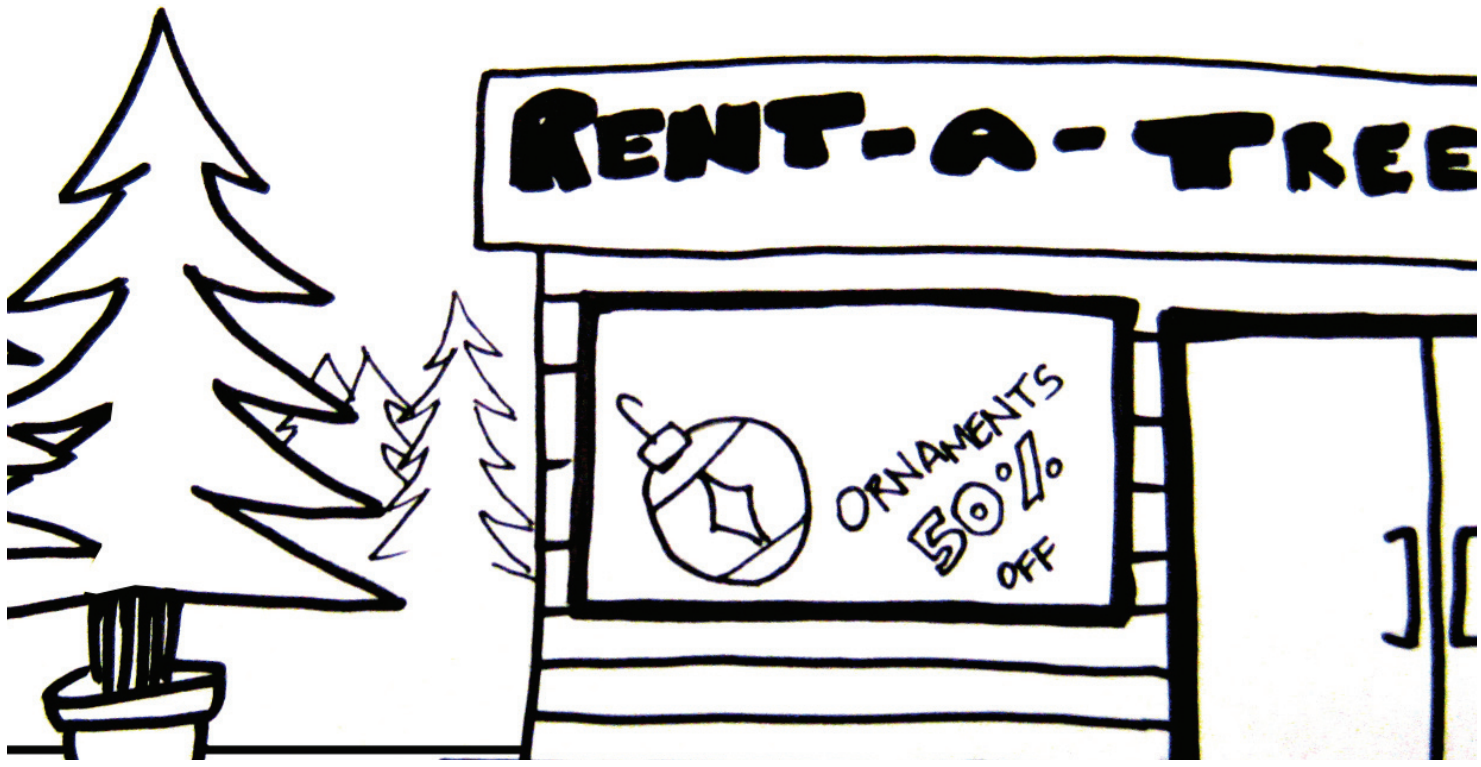
Homelessness was not the only thing on the Spirit of Season's plate. The performance also addressed the different traditions seperating cultures during the holidays. From the start it sets out a scene of different cultural families and their celebrations. Later on a piece featured dancing toys, each stylistically representing a different culture.

Spirit of the Season held together a deeply rooted meaning of acceptance and generosity. The start to solving a problem in society is raising awareness of it, and Spirit of the Season did just that.

The winter holidays can be some of the most troubling months for the economically unstable, between trying to find a place to sleep and a warm meal and feeling the depression brought on by not having a family to spend it with or having gifts to give.

"I hope people came away with a feeling of gratitude for what they have...and the generosity of the season, to help those less fortunate. That's how the world can become a better place," said Felice Moskowitz, a dance teacher involved in the production.

# Fake – real – rented?




Once a dream, now a reality! Visit www.living christmastree.org to rent your own conifer this holiday season.

*Illustration by Margaret Forslund*

**Nicole Wooden, Staff Writer**

'Tis the season to rent a tree! Rent-a-Tree is a service offered by a company called "Living Christmas Tree." It is an organization that provides potted trees that are rented out for holiday season. This company is exclusive to Portland, Oregon, and is finally starting pick up attention, though it opened in 1992.

"It's very simple," promises their web site (http://www.livingchristmastrees.org/)

"First you send us a check deposit of $20 through the mail or any participating store. We will give this back when the tree is returned. We will also explain how to care for the tree."

This sounds good, but the expensive pricing is a turn-off, with the total cost being $120.

However, it makes more sense when explained:

"We charge $100 because we buy them for more than cut trees cost, and we have to buy pots for each tree. We have three workers deliver in each truck. We deliver and pick up our trees because live trees with their roots in pots are not convenient enough for folks to handle themselves," states their web site.

The question is, why shouldn't you just buy a tree?

"Live trees can only be indoors 17 days max for their health after planting. Another problem is eventually the tree will get bigger than the pot, this means that you would need space, something many folks don't have," the site explains.

As for their environmental concerns, the web site reveals the facts:

"Potted trees are best for the environment because they are grown for Christmas, then clean the air for hundreds of years after being planted. Cut trees will only clean the air until they get cut down."

While it is an expensive tree, it is a good idea. Constantly consuming resources for the sake of our own traditions is not a practical way to celebrate, so maybe think about renting a tree this Holiday Season.

# tures

Senior Serenil Sierra thinks it's less than ieal to have Jack Frost nipping at your nose.

*Photo by Christa Moorhead*

## Some like it hot hot hot

**Jenna Miller, Section Editor**

Just as soon as seasonal gusts of wind and sleet start sweeping the streets of Portland, one notices a torrent of dissatisfaction running through the halls of ACMA. It could be Senioritis, or it could be that fast approaching deadline you have been putting off, but if you do not have a Michel's paper, or a Sikking speech to blame for your blue mood, you might have to look to a more elusive culprit.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (aptly named SAD) rains down on the greater Northwest and leaves hundreds of people feeling the loss of the sun more than they should. Symptoms include depression, increased sleep, decreased productivity, carbohydrate cravings, and a lack of energy. If that sounds eerily like the feelings you get around jingle bells and tire chains, fear not, you are in good company. Many adolescents and young adults feel a similar pull towards melancholy hibernation as the days get shorter.

Nationwide, people at higher elevations are unpacking their grinch-like personas along with their decorations and, unfortunately it's a little bit more complicated than a cup of cocoa could fix. Medical specialists have been stumped by SAD since it was identified in 1845. Many doctors believe SAD is a product of a modern society that confines us indoors, while others feel that it is no more complicated than a combination of cold temperatures and shorter periods of daylight. Although Oregon residents have many reported cases of the winter blues, sufferers of SAD in the Northwest have only three short months of winter to fight through, which is minimal compared to their northern neighbors in Alaska and Canada, where daylight can be absent for many months of the year.

Several students at ACMA have already taken steps to preventing the emotional storms that accompany the snow and sleet. Seniors Cassie Williams and Courtney Harbour both invested in sun lamps that turn their dark moods into manageable feelings.

"When I use it the night before, it gives me a far brighter outlook when I wake up the next morning," says Harbour.

"It's an easy way to stay positive through the Portland rain," says Williams.

So don't boo the Santas at the mall or eat yourself to oblivion over the chilly holidays. Instead, take a trip to your local pharmacy and invest in a sun lamp that mimics the sun's therapeutic rays and beams down Vitamin D on its users, and be sure to keep yourself active and cheerful. After all, just because the fat man in red gets stressed over the holidays doesn't mean you should, too.

## Terrorist attempts to harm Portland

**Nysa Smith, Section Editor**

A recent attempted bombing on Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland has raised the question of how far the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will go when it comes to terrorism. Nineteen-year-old Mohamed Osman Mohamud, a muslim resident of Corvallis, planned to set off a van of explosives in Pioneer Courthouse Square during the annual tree lighting ceremony on November 25. The van was a decoy given to him by undercover FBI agents who were investigating him. Mohamud was supposed to set off the explosives via his cell phone and was arrested after it failed.

Those who knew Mohamud prior to his arrest have two stories to tell. One side knew for a while that he intended to pursue a life of terrorism against the United States. In May, he was recorded telling someone behind the camera: "You know what the whole West thing is? They want to insult our religion."

Statements like this surprised the other side. Friends described Mohamud as quiet and smart, but he never quite fit in with most other students.

"He went to school with my brother. He was such a quiet kid. It's kind of scary," said senior Rhiannon Williams.

After the FBI received a tip about Mohamud's desire to be a terrorist, they began monitoring his email. In the early summer of 2010, an undercover FBI agent contacted him, claiming to share his ideals. By the end of July, Mohamud told the agent he was ready to kill. While Mohamud's intent to commit terrorist acts on United States citizens was clear, there is controversy over whether or not the FBI "groomed" him to go as far as he did. The FBI is being questioned on how far they will go to take down potential terrorists when, without their interference, they may just be ordinary citizens.

Muslims in the United States have done their best in the wake of September 11, 2001 to cooperate with terrorism task forces and law enforcement, but the events behind Mohamud's growth have driven a wider rift between them.

Blame has turned to the Muslim communities in Corvallis where Mohamud lived and went to school prior to his engagement with the undercover agents. A mosque where he had occasionally worshipped was attacked and lit on fire two days after he was arrested. Other Muslims in the area fear it is only the start of more attacks.

"When I heard I kind of had this fear for my past self...The atmosphere was just so happy. People were singing, it was all very cheerful, and this morbid thing was happening. I was honestly shocked when my friend told me we could have died," said senior Courtney Harbour, who was present at the tree lighting.

# A and C

## Ankrom's achievement

ACMA's crowning glory is also Ankrom Moisan's greatest achievement

*Photo by Jade Conrad-Deal*

**Kevin McKiernan, Staff Writer**

Awards serve as a benchmark for excellence, a marker and calling card to others telling them that the one who reached that achievement has risen above their peers. These awards, when recognized by a large enough group, garner acclaim and opportunity, and such an award has been given to the PAC. It was given to the Performing Arts Center and its designers, the firm Ankrom Moisan, for outstanding design in the category of Green Architecture.

Built using funds from investments to the Beaverton School District, it was designed for district-wide graduations, events and theater work. For example, it could serve as a place for a graduation ceremony for a school that does not have an auditorium itself. For that purpose, it was designed with a large suite of electronics, including screens and an advanced speaker system for the theater. The auditorium can seat up to 400 people, not including the large art gallery that encircles it.

"The theater is wrapped on two sides with dramatic galleries for visual arts display and critique. All of these environments are contained within architectural volumes that shift size and change color, open and close, capture natural light and cast shadows," said the website of Ankrom Moisan.

Other buildings in their portfolio include Tigard's St. Anthony's Community Center and Elementary School, which was engineered for future expansion. All three are modern designs and function with flexibility to work for a large number of people and purposes.

Sustainability was also a highly important during the project. Creating an environmentally-friendly building fit into the green community that the school has fostered in the last few years, and fit into the general aesthetic of more modern looks that the firm is most famous for.

"Natural light is a key component in the galleries and lobby spaces, crafting the space in a variety of ways. Shading devices temper southern exposure and high efficiency high volume AC systems are planned," says the Moisan website, accompanied by pictures of the theater.

The award is a good omen for the budding center, showing that it has its head and shoulders above its peers. Further improvements will only show good possibilities for the building in general, and, by proxy, the school itself.

## Carefully crafted x-mas

Qori Gutierrez, Section Editor

When the time for gift-giving arrives a store bought gift is nice, but homemade gifts have a unique and personal touch to them. ACMA's Holiday Bazaar proved the perfect place to search for a handmade gift or just get you into the festive spirit. At the Holiday Bazaar, young artists gain experience through selling their work.

On December 16, the Holiday Bazaar was held in the PAC from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. As president of National Art Honors Society, Clara Hooper organized the Bazaar with the help of other NAHS members and advisor Mark Brandau.

The Holiday Bazaar sold items "hand-crafted by student artists and include[d] jewelry, knitted goods (scarves, hats, etc.) small sculptural items, holiday cards, and more," said Brandau.

Thursday, before the Bazaar, Hooper blessed ACMA students with a taste of the holiday treats. Some items that were sold at the Bazaar were offered up for purchase during Access and both lunches. Each artist received 60 percent of their profit and the rest went to NAHS who will put it into a "fund for a pre-college art scholarship awarded at the end of the year," said Brandau.

In the spirit of the holiday season, the Bazaar was 'Life Day' themed, complete with "someone in a Wookie costume," said Hooper.

"'Life Day' is based on the Wookie Holiday from the movie Star Wars. Similar to Christmas--they have a tree of life. It is a celebration of life, family, and friends. [NAHS] coined the theme for our secular Holiday Bazaar so we could keep it festive and exciting without offending anyone," said Hooper.

The Holiday Bazaar coinciding with Life Day proved a fantastic way to keep the holiday spirit alive, Wookie or not.

Junior Simona Lahav previews her hand made chain jewlery for students before class in Jon Albertson's portable.

*Photo by Margaret Forslund*

## A musical remedy

Aparna Parthasarathy, Section Editor

For artists, there is always the looming fear that job availability and pay will not be accessible in their chosen field. That fear is very real and present in the Portland community, where there are several sick musicians living without health insurance. Fortunately, there is a project budding to serve as a solution to the "starving artist" dilemma.

Susannah Weaver and thirty-plus local musicians are joining hands to perform at a benefit concert in order to raise money for those lacking insurance. The event, titled "Time Waits for No One," will consist of tribute covers of songs originally performed by Tom Waits. In addition, a cookbook compiled by Weaver, known as Recipes for Disaster, will be sold at the concert to raise money for the same purpose.

Many of the performers were struggling artists themselves thanks to the many health problems they have carried on their backs. "Jeremy Wilson, of the Dharma Bums and Pilot, discovered he suffered from a rare heart condition that had actually plagued him from his late teens," writes the Oregonian's Don Campbell. The condition was so severe that Wilson was sent to the hospital after falling unconscious at a performance. As an independent musician, Wilson, like many others in the Portland community, cannot afford insurance.

Wilson says he is "just blown away by [Portland's] support. This is a community that really appreciates their artists." The concert and cookbook, a remedy for artists without healthcare everywhere, were pooled together to create an awareness of the poverty among the music community in Portland. The performance, being held at LaurelThirst Public House, asks audiences for an $8 donation so as to get basic funds set. With the wheels in motion, perhaps the stereotype of "starving artist" may be eliminated successfully from our urban dictionary.

# Speak

The Invisible Children organization visited ACMA and other Beaverton high schools to share the stories of those in war torn Northern Uganda. Visit their website www.invisiblechildren.com to learn more and support the cause.

*Photo by Tyler St. Pierre*

## Invisible hope

**Thomas Nelson, Staff Writer**

Our world is full of corruption. Tainted with impurities, the air is contaminated, and oceans are, too. Half of what we read is spoon fed to us by corporate tyrants who are effectively parasites to the human condition. To combat this are countless charity organizations that vow to help galvinize an effort to retrieve and relegate capital to benefit the bulk of society. The only problem with this is that sometimes wealth is prescribed to the wrong people, and transparency of use can never be insured, especially in reference to the war-torn nations of sub-Saharan Africa, a region notorious for power struggles, genocide, poverty, and general abuse. When we first worlders think about these scourges of lacking education, economic turmoil, and AIDS, we frequently shrug at the idea that our global paradigm can shift; and for the better, at that.

When dealing with troubling issues, such as the kidnapping revolutionary Joseph Kony, one must step back. Beyond the issue of child abductions, beyond governmental vice, beyond the squalor of African slums;most importantly, beyond the treadmill of daily existence; we must recontextualize ourselves in a world that is shrinking exponentially. Why is Africa in such disarray? Civil war (As in the Congo, where 47 percent of the casualties are children), diamond excavation, (as is exemplified in "Blood Diamond") mass exploitation, pecuniary exclusion, marginalization. Has the West played any part in this? Are we, at least, partially to blame?

Can the Invisible Children foundation really help reverse this trend?

If the culprit is consumption, or rather, gluttony in behavioral trends, and monopolization on the corporate agenda then the remedy -the 'elixir'- for this problem is simple: consume less, donate more. It is sickening to think there are multi-gazillionaire's out there who give nothing to those who are less fortunate. And if they do, it's displaced through the elaborate contraption that is the non (or for) profit charity organization. It doesn't make sense to throw it at any group without investigating the issue. For example, according to Wikileaks, Shell Gasoline has established dominance in the Nigerian government. This isn't the first time Africa has been exploited for its national resources; the bulk of its people dogged and malnourished or at war. Regulations should help Africa replenish its soil, not rob it of dignity.

## Flipping the seasonal switch

**Nikki Boylan, Staff Writer**

Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas bring in the bucks for commercial businesses, and it is never too early to start shopping. However, it seems like there's been a change in the order of celebration: the wreaths and candy canes are stocked on the shelves before one has even bought a Thanksgiving turkey.

The winter holiday season has always been the most commercialized time of the year, when salespeople attack and commercials use parodies of "Jingle Bells" to advertise their products. Carols are played on the radio before the Thanksgiving meal has graced the table.

"I heard 'Let it Snow' for the first time, and I thought, 'it's that season already?'" admits junior Brook Baise. "It's like I'm forced to start celebrating Christmas early."

Don't get me wrong, I love the holidays. Every year, I look forward to decorating my house and celebrating the magical spirit that comes with this season. However, by the time December 25 comes around, I'm sick of hearing "Sleigh Bells" and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer."

For me, and for many people, the holidays have strayed from the spirit of giving to the spirit of getting: getting gifts, receiving money, and getting burned out.

"The season's purpose has changed," says Molly Rogers, a homeschooled high schooler. "It used to be for spending time with family, not buying stuff for people."

Unfortunately, by the time Thanksgiving is over, people have already bought their gifts and wrapped them. For me, this early flipping of the Christmas switch has taken away from the magical experience I lived for as a child.

As a Catholic, I look forward to Christmas, not "the holiday season." I always anticipated Christmas Eve mass, not low prices on gift items. I miss the excitement for Christmas morning, when I would rocket out of bed (if I even slept that night) and drag my parents to the living room. Now I just want to open those gifts and get the day over with.

I feel that the holidays have lost the meaning they once held in my heart. It's the spirit of the season, but in America, that spirit is lost in the parcels, packages, and bows.

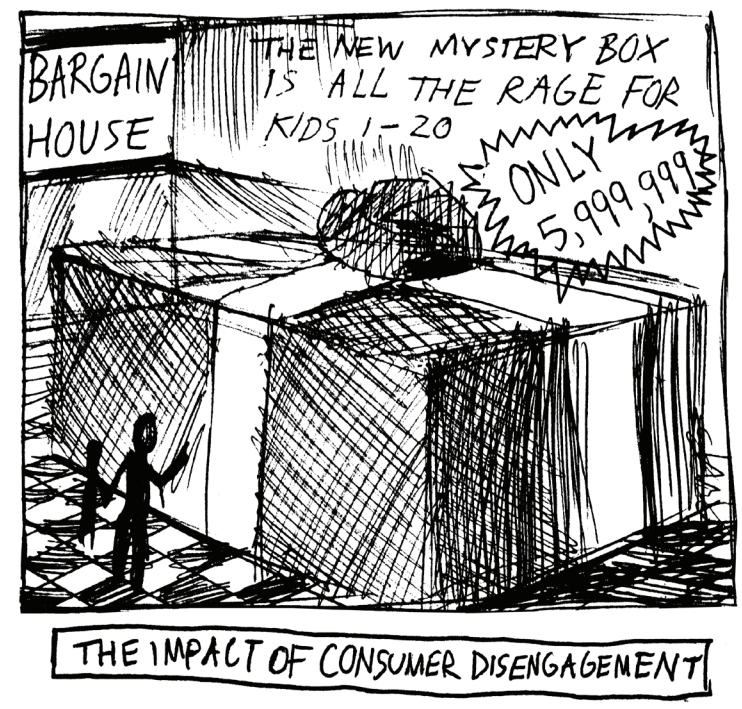



*Illustration by Thomas Nelson*

# Diversions

## A decade of magic comes to a close

The Harry Potter film series approaches its conclusion with the release of the first installment of the two-part finale, which covers roughly the first 350 pages of the 700-page novel. When Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters launch a devastating attack against the magic world, Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson) go on the lam, searching for the magical talismans that give He Who Must Not Be Named his power.

*Caption by Ethan Alter. Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services*

*Photo by Jaap Buitendijk/Courtesy Warner Bros./MCT*

**Aparna Parthasarathy, Section Editor**

Nine years ago, the film industry met an orphan boy with broken glasses and a lightning-bolt shaped scar by the name of Harry Potter. Since then, the hysteria surrounding the young wizard and his many adventures, based on the Harry Potter books by J. K. Rowling, has exploded. Now, Potter is one of the most popular film franchises in the world. On November 19, the first of two parts of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows was released, much to the delight of fans everywhere.

Deathly Hallows follows Potter and his friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, on their quest to destroy five remaining pieces of the villanous Lord Voldemort's soul. Starring actors Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, and Ralph Fiennes as Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Voldemort respectively, the film certainly has a darker tone than its precursors – and holds true to the book.

Fans of the book will remember that the ending of the treasured series by Rowling relies largely on minor details riddled throughout the books, but mainly within the seventh itself. Intending to keep every detail from Deathly Hallows in film-verse, producer David Heyman stated in March of 2008 that the production team behind Warner Brothers' Harry Potter would be splitting the film into two parts.

The film definitely lives up to the promises made by Heyman and his team. Characters, locations, minor plots, and even jokes featured in the book were put into the film, in addition to a few concepts new to Harry Potter. A graphic, CGI-animated sequence was placed – appropriately – into the film when Watson's Hermione read the story of the origin of the Deathly Hallows to both her cohorts and the film's audience. On the other hand, the ending of the film, being directly in the middle of the book's plotline, created a cliffhanger of massive proportions.

Some fans complain that the film spent too much time leading up to a climax that was not present. Certainly this was true, as only one part of the film was released. However, an apex that is minor in comparison did occur – the death of a beloved character that made Twitter's trending list for days to follow.

Former ACMA student, Lauren Preshong, is among those in the majority that is happy with the film.

"It was so accurate and so well done. In my opinion, it was the best of all the Harry Potter films, because it really captured the essence of it."

Current ACMA junior, Alex Melius, is also very pleased with the movie.

"I personally liked it because it was geared to more mature audiences, and because I've 'grown' up alongside Harry, Ron, and Hermione!"

The most obvious plotline leads up to the final battle between Potter and Lord Voldemort (commonly referred to as You-Know-Who) that has yet to happen. The protagonists – especially Harry – are weighed down by the truth that they are, inevitably, in the very center of all danger. All that is left to the audience is to continuously re-read the seventh and final installation in the widely-read Harry Potter series by Rowling until the second installment arrives on the fifteenth of July, 2011.

## Little Shop: The horrors in no way horrific

**Noah Marger, Staff Writer**

From the opening note struck by the doo-wop girls (played by junior Morgan Josef, senior Haley Flannery, sophomore Zoe Sherman, and sophomore Carly Shick) to the ending crash of the pit crew's drummer, Little Shop of Horrors never missed a beat.

Directed by Brian Bertram, Little Shop of Horrors was the second production in the new Performing Arts Center. The play centers around Seymour Krelborn, played by junior Joe Barch, a lowly flower shop employee who has only ever known life on Skid Row, a dumpy looking place where bums congregate in their self pity. While Seymour hates working for the shop's owner Mrs. Mushnik (played by senior Kylie DeHaven) he finds enjoyment in tinkering with a hybrid plant he calls "Audrey II,"(voiced by senior David Kearns and operated by junior Lily Huntzicker) named after his co-worker Audrey (played senior by Heather Priedhorskey).

"I feel like my teaching style, and my directing style are extremely similar, in the fact that I bring a lot of energy," said Director Brian Bertram.

Despite the shop's economic challenges, Seymour is confident that putting this strange and unusual plant on display will attract business. Much to Mrs. Mushnik's surprise, the plant makes the shop more noticeable and business skyrockets. With all the sudden success, Seymour and Audrey II gain notoriety and the plant continues to grow, eventually becoming bloodthirsty. It stops at nothing to get even a few precious drops of blood.

"My favorite part was when Seymour was trying to kill the plant," said sixth grader Miranda Esser.

With the pit band playing exceptionally well (led by Jody DeHaven), the music added an element of drama and suspense that made the play intriguing. (Ensemble included junior Shay Morris-Doty on guitar, senior Heidi Christensen on bass, sophomore Nolan Hamar on drums and freshman Ryan DeHaven on piano). The make-up, the set, and all the different lighting were superb and added to the performance's success.

Overall, Little Shop of Horrors was nearly perfect. The only thing that could have been better is the fact that there were some microphone problems throughout, but the story was still excellent.

As junior Morgan Josef (who played Chiffon) adds, "The show is only as good as the time and energy you put into it, and I think that our efforts really showed."

**Director:** Brian Bertram
**Rating:** 5/5 stars
**Writer:** Howard Ashman
**Music and Lyrics:** Alan Menken

## If you had a million dollars...

**Brandon Fisher, Staff Writer**
**Christa Moorhead, Photo Editor**

Somewhere in the world, a big CEO of an even bigger corporation is doing his holiday shopping. During the time of year when we give each other gifts, the people with the hefty paychecks can shell out a lot of their loot for some really ridiculous things. Here are some that are definitely only for the exceptionally rich: (For those who can afford them, these can all be found at various places online.)

#1. World's Fastest Electric Motorcycle-$68,995- This pricey vehicle is not only capable of reaching speeds of up to 150 mph, but it is also good for the environment. And with a recharge time of two hours and the relevance of gas mileage removed, what's not to like?

#2. Polished Steel Ping-Pong Table-$55,000- A perfectly mirrored surface for playing the game of small-scale tennis. If you want to be able to see your face during the game, it is good for that as well.

#3. World's Most Expensive Legal Street Car-$1,700,000- The Bugatti Veyron is not only a car for the rich and famous, it is a car for the speed demon in all of us. This car also tops the list for acceleration going from 0 to 60 miles per hour in 2.6 seconds.

#4. Edible Life-sized gingerbread house-$15,000- With a gingerbread house that weighs 898 pounds, is 6.6 feet high, 5.25 feet wide, and 4.1 feet deep, this is sure to feed the whole family and more. But the real question is, who needs all that sugar?

#5. Halo 3 Master Chief Costume-$900- From the popular Halo franchise, this costume is perfect for taking on either a horde of interplanetary invaders or simply the rest of the cosplayers.

#6. Most Expensive Pair of Jeans-$250,000- Do people always tell you that your jeans aren't nice enough? Well do not worry, because each pair of these jeans are adorned with 17.7 carats of precious jems.

#7. Most Expensive Coffee-$600 per pound- Kopi Luwak has the most expensive price tag in the world. It is commonly believed that the coffee is made from a coffee bean that has been eaten, and partly digested by the common palm civet, a weasel like animal.